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GIFT OF
MR. JOSEPH C. ROSENGARTEN

Our People in American History.

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED AT THE

German Centennial Jubilee,

AT READING, PA., JUNE 19, 1876.

BY

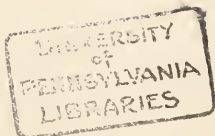
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OUR PEOPLE IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

ORATION BY HON. DANIEL ERMENROUT.

On the 27th of August, 1739, nearly 137 years ago, the good ship Samuel brought to the shores of Pennsylvania 340 German immigrants. Among them were three individuals—father, son and grand-son. They came to the territory now embraced within the county of Berks, here settled, begat children, and here they and their posterity have continued to live to the present time. The individual who stands before you now, bears the name and blood of those three humble men, and he is proud here, upon his native soil in this glorious year, after the lapse of all this time, to tell to those ancestors' countrymen, among them some, perhaps, whose eyes first saw the light of day in the village they were born, who rambled among the fields where their infant feet trod, who worshipped at the same altar at which they were baptized—as best he can, the story of what the German race has done to transform the howling wilderness of that date into broad and fertile acres, populous valleys and magnificent cities. What hardships from exposure, what dangers from wild beasts, and cruelties they suffered from the lurking and merciless savage; what they did to wrest this land from kingly rule, and what they have contributed towards the triumphs of peace—all combining to the building up of the vast and mighty empire now known as the United States of

North America, the hundredth year of whose freedom the German societies of this section are to-day celebrating. The heart swells and the lip trembles at the contemplation of the theme. It is a subject worthy to be treated by an abler tongue. But to no one, so far as sympathy and inclination are concerned, more pleasing.

To every American of German descent it should be an especial pleasure, as well as duty, to portray in fitting terms the deeds of his ancestors, because from a variety of causes, the historian has never done them the justice to which they are entitled. A studious effort was also made in the earlier history of this State to deprive them of the credit that was their due, and to impair their influence in its political affairs. Nor have they fared any better from the pencil of the painter.

Go to the Memorial Hall at Philadelphia, and you will there see two pictures; one by Puebla, portraying the landing of Columbus. The central figure is the great Colon himself, kneeling, dressed in the gorgeous scarlet costume of his country, surrounded by armed cavaliers in the same position; and standing erect with crucifix uplifted, a representative of the most powerful Church the world has ever seen; above him floats the standard of the nation upon whose vast dominions the sun never rose nor set, the Kingdom then ruled by Ferdinand and Isabella; while in the bushes, peering in wonder and amazement at the scene, stand the awe-struck savages. The other, by the pencil of Gisbert, represents the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. You recognize, in the central figure, the pious pastor standing on the rock, with elevated hands and devout aspect, the beautified features of women in neat attire grace the

scene, and in the back-ground appear the masts of the *Mayflower*.

These pictures have immortalized the "Discovery" and the "Landing." Poetry, religion, eloquence and art, all have combined to impress these facts upon history with a grandeur and an emphasis, and to surround them with a halo which have rarely fallen to the lot of human occurrences. These people were masters of their own movements, and behind the one stood the power of Spain, and behind the other that of the English government, each speaking the language respectively of their colonists, each taking an interest and a pride in their success. The one spurred on by the pride of conquest, the other inspired by the ties of sympathy.

So, too, who has not seen the prostrate form of Smith, protected from the club of Powhatan by Pocahontas, and Penn's treaty with the Indians, glowing on the canvass. In vain we do we look for the pencilled story of the homeless, houseless, wandering exiles from Germany; their cruel voyage across the sea; their arrival among a people who understood not their language; their lonely, dangerous and difficult journey through the wilderness towards the Blue Mountains. Nor do we anywhere find pictured their evening or morning worship in the primeval forest before extending themselves around the camp fire by night, or preparing for the journey of the day. No Government speaking their language, protected them. Regarded as dangerous by the Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania as early as 1717,* they were hurried to the sections now comprised within the territory of Lancaster,

*Col. Rec., Vol. III, p. 29, 228.

Berks, Northampton and Schuylkill counties—then frontiers, and frontiers up to 1768—far remote in the Indian ranges and hunting grounds, to form a cordon or defensive barrier against Indian enterprises.†

Visit your State Capitol. The faces that adorn the walls of your public buildings there during the proprietary era, rest on shoulders coated with mail. We fared no better in this respect during the Revolutionary period. In 1717 a great fear of German immigration disturbed the Proprietary Governors. This fear continued up to 1729, as the letters of James Logan, the communications of Governors Keith and Gordon to the Council and Assembly, during which period various devices were resorted to to obstruct immigration, culminating, finally, in a head tax. In 1730 the law was modified to apply only to vagrants,* but the prejudices sown in the preceding years still remained. Our ancestors did not see why, after paying for their lands and being assured by the Proprietary Government that the Indian title—the source of much of their difficulty—should be quieted, that they should be taxed by the Proprietors to protect the untaxed Proprietary property. They rebelled, and when they came down to Philadelphia, to vote for members of Assembly, they voted against the wishes of the Proprietary Government, and on Feb. 25, 1750, Thomas Penn writes to Gov. Hamilton: "I am greatly alarmed, the Germans behave so insolently at the elections; they must no doubt do so from the numbers given^d them at the back counties. The taking of

† Watson's Annals, Gov. Denny's Letter, Nov. 10, 1756. Archives, 1756—1760, p. 44.

* Seidensticker's Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft, p. 19.

counties from Bucks and Philadelphia (Northampton and Berks) will take off their settlements and leave only two members of eight, and prevent them, for many years, from having a majority.* There can be no doubt that we have suffered much from these prejudices. The silence of history concerning the achievements of our race has also by the great American historian, Bancroft, been attributed to the "modesty" of our ancestors. He says: "Neither they nor their descendants have laid claim to all the praise that was their due."† But the hour has struck, when the children of the great Arminius, whether foreigner or native born, and of all creeds now in this land, and especially in this State, should search the records of the past and let their children know and let the world know the achievements of the race here in this Western Continent. Without malice or undue partiality, spread them in such form upon the pages of history, that their virtues may be perpetuated, a source of pride to all their blood and an example worthy to be emulated by all, to the last syllable of recorded time.

It will be impossible, with a due regard for your comfort, nor do I possess the ability to lay before you all that should be said, and for both reasons I shall be compelled to confine myself ~~merely~~ *mainly* to our own locality in the historical portions of my discourse.

When Penn came here in 1681, he found the colonies already planted by the Teuton blood in the persons of Swedes and Dutch, dating back to 1633. Philadelphia he settled in 1681—1682. It will be remembered in

*Henry's "Lehigh Valley," p. 24.

†Kapp's Steuben, Introduction, p. 7.

this connection that William Penn himself was half Dutch by his mother. Prior to his settlement here he had made two journeys through Germany as Quaker preacher. After William Penn became the proprietor of the country named in honor of his father, he in 1681 published the paper setting forth the advantages and conditions of settlement in Pennsylvania. It was immediately translated. Germany was full of all manner of intensive religionists, among whom the Quaker preachers had obtained a foothold. These then began to become enthusiastic to lead a religious life in Pennsylvania. In 1682 a company was formed at Frankfort, called the Frankfort Company, for the purpose of furthering emigration to Pennsylvania and opening trade. Francis-Daniel Pastorius was their agent, and he in the year 1683, with some thirteen families, came to Philadelphia and laid the foundation for the first settlement the German emigrants established in this country.* The Frankfort Company in 1686, Nov. 24, held by their Germantown patent 5,350 acres, and by the Manatawny patent 22,377 acres. In this latter patent were included lands on the Manatawny Creek, and now partly belonging to the county of Berks. From this it would appear that the country along the Manatawny in Berks was included in the first settlement after Philadelphia. Germantown remained for over one hundred years a German town. It had for a portion of this time its Burgomaster, Clerk, &c. The Seal of the Corporation was a Clover leaf, with the figures of the Vine, Hemp Flower and Weaver's Spool on the three leaves, and the legend *Vinum, Linum et Textrinum, Wein Lein und Webeschrein*—

*Seidensticker, p. 8. Gordon's Pennsylvania, p. 60.

types, in the language of the Historian of the German society, of the mission of the Germans in the New World. Husbandry, industry and contented enjoyment of life. Here, in 1738, was the first German printing press; here appeared the first German newspaper, and in 1743 the German quarto Bible—the first Bible printed on this Continent in an European language. The emigration up to 1702 was small, not exceeding 200 families. But when at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries, the besom of war and destruction swept over the Palatinate and Western Germany, immigration received a powerful impetus. The records of no age show the perpetration of more dreadful barbarities than those committed by the robber bands of Louis XIV. Cupidity, political ambition and religious hatred have all combined to make these years of European history as dark, bloody and cruel as those that have stained any similar period of the world's history. It seemed as if the devil had been let loose and the world given over to his evil devices. In Southern Germany, where German princes sought to ape the Court of Louis XIV. and French manners, it was no better.

If these be glory, if people deserve immortality for these, there is no page in the history of nations too bright for the German emigrants, who were by these driven from the land of their birth at the beginning of the 18th century, to find a home and an asylum here. This emigration continued up to 1720. Subsequently a desire to better their temporal concerns, brought emigration hither, and from 1725 to 1744 it began to include all sorts of religions—German Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Moravians, Schwenkfelders,

&c. The earliest German Catholic settlement was that of Cusanhoppen in 1741. This extended into that part of Berks county known as Washington township. Its first pastor was Father Schneider, who at that early period travelled from Philadelphia through Bucks, Chester, Berks and Northampton counties, frequently on foot, in the discharge of his pastoral duties. The chapel built by him in that year has by constant additions become a very large building, with a numerous congregation. In the church now repose the bones of Father Schneider.*

Before 1738 a respectable number of Schwenkfelders also settled in parts of what is now Berks county, where many of their descendants have continued ever since. As early as 1723 Tulpechocken was settled by Germans, who left Schoharie on account of the unjust manner in which they were treated by the Governor of New York. They had come to New York in 1710, and settled at Schoharie in 1713. From the beauty of the country through which the Tulpechocken flowed, they called the settlement Heidelberg. So it is to this day, surrounded by lovely hills, Heidelberg in the county of Berks. To this day the descendants of those settlers in that region are known by their names. May 18, 1729, a letter was written to Schoharie inviting the famous Conrad Weiser to come and settle among them for their protection against the Indians, from whom difficulties were apprehended, and with whom Weiser had great influence at that date.† He come and settled near Womelsdorf. This Conrad Weiser was a remarkable man.

*Mss. Augustine Bally, Churchville, Pa., present pastor.

†Aus Berks County's *Schwerer Zeit*. Wollenweber—p. 8.

His fame soon reached the ears of the Government at Philadelphia; he was sent for, made Indian agent, and from the time of his coming to Berks county to the time of his death—a period of 31 years—he was the protecting genius of the Pennsylvania settlements. It is not necessary for me to tell this audience that the hardware store, north-east corner of Penn and Fifth streets, is the site of the building occupied by him for trading and other purposes. There the savages would come from many miles around to see the great pale-faced medicine man, dance their wild dances, perform their savage ceremonies and smoke the pipe of peace. He died July 13, 1760, and is buried on the farm where he dwelt. On Nov. 13, 1793, General Washington, accompanied by Gen. Joseph Hiester and other distinguished persons, stood at the grave of the German man, Conrad Weiser, and said: "This departed man, in a most difficult period, rendered many services to his country; posterity will not forget him." He was born in Alstaedt, Wurtemberg.* His descendant, Dr. C. Z. Weiser, of the Reformed Church, is now preparing his biography, a matter too long neglected.

The Tulpehocken settlement, after Braddock's defeat in 1755, was the scene of the most frightful massacres. History tells us that in one week in Tulpehocken district, at the foot of the Blue Mountains, 32 men, 21 women and 17 children, 70 souls, were murdered in the most frightful manner; 21 houses and barns burned, the cattle destroyed or carried off. Under the energetic action of Conrad Weiser and his friend Capt. Spyker, the settlers armed and the Indians were driven back. The

*Wollenweber—p. 9.

like barbarities were perpetrated in Northampton county, hundreds of the inhabitants were killed and their buildings destroyed. In Feb. 1756, they murdered, killed and burned in Albany township. Early in March they inflicted similar cruelties at a place called Conrad's Mills, in Berks county. March 24th the house of Peter Kluck, 14 miles from Reading, was set on fire, and the family, five in number, murdered. Later, in 1763, in September, about 24 miles from Reading, the settlements beyond Blue Mountains were attacked, and men, women and children killed, some scalped alive and others carried off. A few days after, the home of Franz Hubler, in Bern township, 18 miles from Reading, was attacked. He was wounded, his wife and several children carried off and three others scalped alive. There were about 200 miles of an extended frontier so exposed to the invasion of the Indians that no man could go to sleep within 10 or 15 miles of the border without the fear of having his house burned and himself and family led into captivity before the next morning. No man could tell where the Indians would strike the next blow.* These are a specimen of the dangers and hardships to which the German settlers of this section of the State were subjected. Yet history, while detailing barbarities inflicted by the merciless savages in other sections, has been so written that the children of Eastern Pennsylvania never knew of any other Indians than King Philip, Pontiac and Black Hawk. They never hear of Lieut. Col. Weiser, and it is by merest accident that they learn that among the German settlers were any who ever killed, or were killed by, Indians. Yet here were our ancestors

*Wollenweber—Gordon.

within the boundaries of this very county, exiles from their native land, in hourly and nightly peril of their lives. Liable at any moment to be shot in the field, their wives and children liable to be shot down or carried off while visiting their neighbors, liable to be awakened in the dead hour of night by savage yells, only to behold the devouring flames rolling over their barns and houses, with death from an Indian tomahawk or rifle certain to meet them at the door should they attempt to escape. And with all this they conquered, and their descendants are here to-day, many of them owning and tilling the land their ancestors fought to wrest from the Indians. Among the persons whose names have come down to us with Conrad Weiser's sons, as powerful against the Indians and Capt. Spyster already mentioned, were Dietrich Schneider and Joseph Hiester, the latter born in German Switzerland. He, with his two brothers, settled Bernville. In their many encounters with the Indians they were victorious, and impressed them with such a wholesome fear that the savages avoided the neighborhood of Bernville for a long time. Before leaving this branch of my subject, it is proper to state that in 1711, 1,000 Germans were engaged in the expedition to Quebec. That, with reference to Brad-dock's expedition, he himself writes, May 24, 1755, in a letter to Gov. Morris, of New York, complaining of his disappointment. "In short in every instance, but in my contract for Pennsylvania wagons, I have been deceived and met with nothing but lies and villainy."* There were few wagons in Pennsylvania owned by any but our people.

*Col. Rec., Vol. VI., p. 399.

We now approach the period of the revolution, a chapter in our history to which Germans of all creeds, whether foreign or native born, can point with pride. Our ancestors—your countrymen—knew what tyranny and oppression were. They had been driven or fled from a country whither they had been the victims and sport either of the foreign invaders or of their own rulers. They had already faced many dangers, and in spite of all, with no aid from their own country, with little, if any, from the Proprietary Government, they had maintained themselves and made the wilderness to bloom and blossom as the rose. Their moral life previously had been unexceptional. In 1730, 8th month, 14th, Rev. Jed. Andrews writes of us: "They are diligent, sober, frugal people, rarely charged with any misdemeanors. Many of them live yet in the county, have farms, and by their industry and frugal way of living, grow rich. They have the best lands in the Province."* In 1738 Gov. Thomas said of them: "I believe it may be truthfully said that the present flourishing condition of it (the Province) is in a great measure owing to the industry of these people; it is not altogether the fertility of the soil, but the number and industry of the people that makes a country flourish."† With it all they manifested a spirit of intelligent independence second to that of no race in the world's history. In 1723, rather than suffer the oppressive exactions of the Governor of New York, they had settled in Tulpehocken. As early as 1750, according to Thomas Penn's letter, they had learned to vote in a way that he denominated "*insolent.*"

*15 Hazard's Register, p. 200.

†Col. Rec., Vol. IV., p. 315.

He writes the wrong word. It was *independent*. In 1755, 400 Germans marched in an orderly and peaceable manner to Philadelphia and, in person, petitioned for the passage of just laws for protection from Indians. The Governor of the Province was then endeavoring to pass laws for raising money by a system of taxation which did not embrace the large quantities of lands then held by the Proprietaries to which they were justly opposed. The same year at an election in Reading for Sheriff, Jonas Seely, a candidate for the office, at the opening of poll had all voices in his favor, but it being reported that he was of the Governor's party, "the Germans" left him to a man and he was defeated.* In 1757, June 30th, Gov. Denny writes to the Proprietaries—"that the Berks County Militia refuse to serve under any but their own officers."†

One of the reasons why Western Pennsylvania was not settled as the East was, by our ancestors, was that those lands being claimed by Virginia, a parish tax was exacted for support of English Establishment in that State. Several Germans proposed to the Ohio Company, in whose charge they were, to take and settle with 200 families, 50,000 acres of these lands, if they could be exempt from this tax. To this, though favored by Lawrence Washington, the State of Virginia would not agree, and thus this section lost the advantages of the German emigration.** Later still in 1764 we find them memorializing the Governor and Assembly among other grievances on the inequality of representation of

*Gordon, p. 316. Weiser's Letter, Oct. 2, 1755.

†Penna. Archives, 1756-60, p. 194.

**Old Redstone, p. 24.

the counties of Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Berks and Northampton, they altogether having but 10 members, Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks sending 26.* It will thus be perceived that the spirit that makes freemen, burned brightly in the German breast when occasion required. Bancroft says, "at the commencement of the Revolution we hear *little* of them, not from their want of zeal in the good cause, but from their modesty."† Be this as it may. In the occurrences that led to the Revolutionary war the student will always find the German name. In 1765, after the passage of the obnoxious Stamp Act, to the compact agreeing to import no British goods, are found the names of the German merchants of Philadelphia, Heinrich Keppele, Sr., Heinrich Keppele, Jr., Johann Steinmetz, David Deschler, Daniel Wister, Johann Wister and others, and Heinrich Miller's paper did not conceal its disgust.** "If we do hear little of them," as Bancroft says, "we hear *from* them, there are their names." Bancroft further says, in the same book, "They kept themselves purposely in the background, leaving it to those of English origin to discuss the violation of English liberty, and to decide whether the time for giving battle had come." We think this is a grave mistake. Reasoning from the spirit they showed in the causes of emigration, their contests with the Proprietaries and their action during the Indian struggles, the Germans needed no man to tell them what was a violation of liberty. The English nation owed its existence to the Teuton race, its liberty to that blood, to the

*Gordon, p. 448.

†Kapp's Steuben, Introduction.

**Seidensticker's Geschichte, p. 227.

Saxon, the Germanic race. It was Hengist and Horsa, the Saxons, who saved the Britons from the Piets and Scots in the 5th century, and then became masters of the island itself. They and their Saxons gave to that land its Jury System, the great bulwark of liberty.*

James Logan, in a letter written in 1729, on the subject of German emigration, alludes to the exploits of our Saxon ancestors in England, where he says "the numbers from Germany at this rate will soon produce a Germany Colony here, and, perhaps, such an one as Briton once received from Saxony in the 5th century."† To say, therefore, that they left others to discuss violations of English liberty or any liberty, is contrary to their previous history and is to charge our people with stupidity and ignorance of what was transpiring under their very eyes. The record is the other way. Mr. Baneroff is not to be charged with intentional injustice toward us, for he does say in the article from which we have quoted, "But when the resolution was taken, no part of the country was more determined in its patriotism than the German counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia." The question is, did they help *to take the resolution*? "The Americans of that day who were of German birth or descent formed a large part of the population of the United States; not less than a twelfth of the whole, and, perhaps, formed even a larger portion of the insurgent people."**

In 1747 they were already three-fifths of the whole population of the State—the whole population being

*Hume, Vol. I., p. 15.

†Rupp's Berks and Lebanon Counties, p. 92.

**Baneroff.

then 200,000.* Emigration continued up to 1776. Pennsylvania was the most flourishing of the Colonies. We believe that this estimate is below the actual figures. But at all events the great majority of the citizens of Pennsylvania were, at the outbreak of the Revolution, Germans by birth or descent. They had their own newspapers. They had their churches and school houses, learned and independent ministers, and at Philadelphia a German society or Gesellschaft. To ask the world, in view of their antecedents, to believe that this majority, with these means of information, with their intelligence and character, could so restrain the impulses of their race and blood as to purposely "stand in the background," and be floated by the minority, without materially helping to take the resolution to fight, is putting an unreasonable burden on our credulity. Then we must remember that in addition to having smelled gunpowder among the Indians, there were many who were old soldiers or the descendants of soldiers, who, like Christopher Ludwig, believed, "Ohne Schwefel und Salpeter keine Freiheit" (without sulphur and saltpeter no freedom.)

The record is right on this point. In the Provincial Convention of 1774 and 1775 appear names like Schlosser, Ludwig, Christopher, Schultz, Baltzer, Gehr—the two latter from Berks county. In the Committee of Correspondence such names as Hillegas, Engel and others. In 1774 the large meeting was held at Reading, in which the people declared themselves for liberty.

The names of Germans are found in abundance in

*Gov. Thomas, April 23, 1747. Episcopal Church History in Pennsylvania, by W. S. Perry, D. D., p. 265.

all the Vigilance Committees established at that time. A pamphlet, which was printed in German in Philadelphia in 1775, is a most important piece of evidence. It is entitled "Message of the Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church Consistory and of the officers of the German Association in Philadelphia, to the German inhabitants of the Provinces of New York and North Carolina." It demonstrates that the Germans had arrayed themselves already on the side of freedom, and needed no instructions on that point. It says, "We have from time to time daily with our eyes seen that the people of Pennsylvania generally, rich and poor, approve of the conclusions of Congress; 'especially have the Germans of Pennsylvania, near and far from us, distinguished themselves, and not only established their militia, but have formed picked corps of rangers, who are ready to march 'wherever it may be required,' and those among the Germans, who cannot serve personally, are throughout willing to contribute according to their means to the common good." The pamphlet was one of 40 pages and is an exhaustive statement of the question. It ends with this significant sentence, "By order of the assembled members of the Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church Consistory and of the authorities of the German Society." It is signed by Ludwig Weis, who was chairman of the committee.*

Here, then, was the expressed thought of organized societies, the mouth-pieces of the Germans, as early as August 1775, which could not have been the growth of a few months. Why did the Continental Congress so soon and so unhesitatingly seek to utilize the Germans?

*Seidensticker, p. 227.

Why was it so easy to obtain soldiers in the German counties, if the Germans had not thought of the issue and helped to make it before the call came? May 25, 1776, Congress resolved to create a German Regiment, four Companies from Maryland and four from Pennsylvania. By July 17th, Pennsylvania had raised her four and an additional one, which was commanded by Geo. Woepper, an old German soldier, who had served under Washington in numerous campaigns. Washington most urgently recommended him to Congress as a reliable man. Among the officers appear such names as Haussager, Burekhard, Rollwagen, Lora, Hubley, Boyer, Schaeffer, Kotz, Weiser, Bower, Yeiser. On July 4th, 1776, the day the Declaration was proclaimed, a meeting was held of the officers and privates of 53 Battalions of Associators of the Colony of Pennsylvania at Lancaster—Berks, Bucks, Lancaster, York and Northampton counties were represented by Germans. Here they are from Berks—Levan, Hiester (of these there were three, Joseph, John and Daniel, who were an enduring name in the Revolution), Lindermuth, Loeffler, Kremer, Lutz, Muller, Keim, Hartman, Filbert, Wenrich, Spohn, Moser, Seltzer and the like.*

In July, 1775, Capt. George Nagle enlisted a Company of Volunteers at Reading, marched with them to Boston, where they arrived a month later, served there until the surrender or evacuation of Boston, from thence were sent to defend New York, and participated in all the battles up to their discharge in July, 1776. Capt. Nagle was afterwards Lieutenant Colonel of the 9th Penna. Regiment. Berks county had seven Battalions

*Rupp's Berks County.

in the war. At the last battle of Long Island, three Battalions captured by the Hessians were mostly Germans from Pennsylvania. Lancaster county furnished nine complete Regiments. After all the young men had left Reading for the Army, the old men—eighty in number—formed a new Company. Their Captain was 97, and the drummer 84 years of age.* Our people were at Trenton, Princeton, Long Island, Brandywine, and Germantown.†

There can be no question that throughout the war the German emigrant and his descendants gave abundant proof that the blood which centuries before had, under the great Herrman, in the forests of German, almost before the birth of Christ, broken the mighty power of Rome; which in later years built up the powerful German empire, afterwards disrupted, but the fragments of which we now in our day, after one of the greatest wars of modern times, after the lapse of ages, have seen gathered together under one banner and one sovereign—still flowed in their veins. On every hillside they drew their swords in defence of liberty, under the ensign of the young Republic. On every battle field they baptized their devotion in their own blood with a patriotism surpassed by soldiers of no race. They toiled and suffered on the march, on the field, in the roar of battle—they died that the nation might live. I cannot close this part of my discourse with making again green with grateful tribute the graves of the gallant Steuben and DeKalb, and endeavoring this day to raise in your hearts new monuments to their memory. To them we owe much.

*Force's Records.

Weidensticker.

The one had learned the art of war under Frederick the Great, the other under Marshall Saxe. The latter, after years of the most useful and tiresome service, fell on the bloody field of Camden, pierced with eleven wounds, regretted by friend and foe, who watched with tenderest concern by his bedside till life had fled. Soldier to the last, his thoughts were of his brave comrades, and before expiring he charged his adjutant to give them "thanks for their valor, and bid them an affectionate farewell." Native born citizens of America, you who at times have suffered yourselves to be banded together oath bound, in imitation of the British tyrants of colonial times, to obstruct and hinder those political rights of aliens which you have now guaranteed by law to the negro, what had this gallant German to gain by coming to the wilds of America? He left position, promise of preferment, everything that could dazzle the mind of a soldier, or gratify an honorable ambition. He left the society of a charming and lovely wife to whom he was devoted, the quiet of a home he yearned for, and met death at the hands of an enemy with whom he had no quarrel, that you and I and our descendants forever might be free in our civil rights, our political rights, and that we might without prejudice to either, worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience. Gabriel's trump alone can summon the unknown and forgotten Germans, who in that eventful period died martyrs to the sacred cause of freedom, whom some of you would again crucify in their countrymen. And what was the spirit of Steuben? Listen to his letter to Congress, Dec. 1777: "Honorable gentlemen—The honor of seeing a nation engaged in the noble enterprise

of defending its right and liberties, was the motive that brought me to this continent. I ask neither riches nor titles. I am come here from the remotest end of Germany at my own expense. I should willingly purchase at the expense of my blood the honor of having my name enrolled among those of the defenders of your liberty.*

To Gen. Washington he says, "I sha'l only add that the object of my greatest ambition is to render your country all the services in my power, and *to deserve the title of a citizen of America by fighting for the cause of your liberty.*"†

Well did he fulfill his pledge. He brought order out of chaos. He created our Regular Army. He taught them manœuvres. He introduced into the Army such a system of drills, inspections and reports as enabled our raw militia to combat successfully with the British Regulars, and saved the treasury \$600,000. He made the American infantry equal to the best troops of the time. The system he laid down continued to be the only one known to the American army for a long time, with such modifications as the great wars of the French revolution introduced. Unlike DeKalb, he lived to see the struggling colonies become free and independent States. He himself became an honored citizen of New York, living upon a tract of land in Oneida county, near the present Utica. In 1794, full of years and honors, he died and was laid to rest under a hemlock tree near his residence. On the very spot a public road was afterwards laid out and the old warrior's coffin

*Journals of Congress, XIII., p. 114.

†Sparks, Wash. Writings, Vol. V., p. 28.

was exposed. By the hands of some affectionate friends it was removed to a neighboring hillside and covered by a simple slab, upon which appears the name "Steuben." Underneath rests all that is mortal of that brave German man who, having served abroad in seven campaigns for two and twenty years, gave his mature experience to the cause of American liberty. He ranked next to Washington and Greene, the great Generals of the Revolution."*

But it was not only in warlike services that our people distinguished themselves. They enjoyed Washington's confidence to a marked degree. He was never deceived by them, and he knew that his appeals for aid were never in vain. The granaries and wagons and storehouses of the German farmers of Pennsylvania could not be supplied from any other source; they were indispensable to the cause. Reading was headquarters for military stores. The log house, southwest corner of Sixth and Franklin streets, was an old granary. But it did not stop here. The gold and silver which these frugal people had gathered by years of previous industry, was cheerfully yielded up for public use. At Washington's request nine citizens of Pennsylvania gave their personal bonds to pay in gold and silver £21,000, over \$100,000, for provisions to supply the Army of Liberty. I give you their names—Michael Hillegass, John Steinmetz, Abraham Bickley, Joseph Bleivor, Henry Keppel, Fred. C. Hassenelever, Isaac Melcher, John Schaeffer, Andrew Doz. Is there any doubt of their ancestry? During the whole period of the war, Michael Hillegass was the Treasurer of the United States. I must not for-

*Kapp's Steuben. Green's DeKalb and Steuben.

get in this connection Washington's "honest friend," Christopher Ludwig. He spent of his time and money. In the convention, at which Gov. Mifflin proposed a subscription for the purchase of arms, when discouraging voices were heard, the old soldier arose and said, "Mr. President, I am only a poor gingerbread baker, but write down for me £200." This closed the debate. He was a man of immense influence, he always could rally the Germans, and always did so. He also believed that "a false weight was an abomination to the Lord," for when Washington told him that he simply wished to have a pound of bread for a pound of flour, the old man said, "no, you shall have ~~455~~ lbs."* Christopher Ludwig should be canonized and made the Patron Saint of the bakers of the land. These are a sample of the deeds of the Germans in the Revolution; and the records and traditions of the times, scattered throughout Eastern Pennsylvania and the valley of Virginia, abound with similar examples; so that it cannot be truthfully denied that in everything that contributed to the independence of America, the German men stood second to none! Truthfully indeed has Baneroft said: "Neither they nor their descendants have laid claim to all the praise that was their due."

per 100 lbs

The second war of the Revolution, that of 1812, is so recent that there are so many persons still living who can bear testimony to the patriotism of the citizens of Eastern Pennsylvania, that it is a waste of time to dwell upon it. Suffice it to say that when it occurred, Simon Snyder, a Pennsylvania German, occupied the Gubernatorial chair in this State.

*Rupp. Seidensticker.

In the civil war that burst upon the land in 1861, on both sides of the conflict foreign Germans and descendants of Germans of every creed, ably maintained the reputation of German valor. 80,000 Germans fought on the Union side. How many on the Confederate side, we have not had time to ascertain. On the Union side we have such names, foreign and native, as Schimmel-pfennig, Siegel, Rosecrans, and a host of others. To detail them, rank and file, is to write a large page of your country's glory. Amongst the Confederates we recognize such names as Zollicoffer, Imboden, Deshler, Yerger and others. If their names were written out, many books would not contain them, and looking over the roll we would be very forcibly reminded of Rupp's 30,000 names of German Immigrants to Pennsylvania. We have yet to learn that the laurels their countrymen and ancestors had won in many a well contested field in Europe, in the Indian wars, the Revolution, 1812, and Mexico, suffered through them. So far as money was concerned, the German counties of Pennsylvania did their full share; but here the subject becomes too extensive, nor is it necessary to dwell up on it in view of the fact that thousands of the survivors of that war are to be found in every part of the land. We must also bear this in mind—that the Eastern counties of Pennsylvania have been a hive from which, since the Revolution, year after year swarms of Pennsylvania Germans with plow, and axe, and wagon have penetrated into every county of Pennsylvania, in some instances actually capturing by arts of peace as Hengist and Horsa, their Saxon ancestors, did by arms from the Britons, the lands from the descendants of the original settlers; for in-

stance, Franklin county, which was settled, we believe, by Scotch-Irish. They have migrated East, West, North and South; so that it is not possible for one to go to any section of the country, even to the remotest, that you are not certain to find a Pennsylvania German or his descendants; so, too, with the countrymen of his ancestors, so that, were we to undertake to write or speak all that might be said, we would be writing the greater part of our country's prosperity and history.

Their influence on politics, commerce, trade and American civilization is beyond the power of any one man fully to comprehend or portray. If you will examine the Roll of Constitutional Conventions held in this State, beginning with that of 1776 down, you everywhere find the German name. If you will look into the Records of Political Conventions of both parties, national or otherwise, there they are again. Take up the Roll of your National Congress at this day, there you will find them. The records of your own State Legislature, you will find them there. And in all these bodies, past and present, you will in vain look for minds more able, counsellors more active or sagacious, hearts more upright, and records freer from taint even in this day and generation, when investigations are so rife. Most conspicuous among these are the names of Allen Thurman, U. S. Senator from Ohio, and Thomas A. Hendricks, ex-United States Senator and present Governor of Indiana—both of them prominent candidates for Presidential nomination in this Centennial year, Both bearing German names and well maintaining its honors. Indiana and Ohio have been largely settled by immigration from the German counties of Pennsylvania.

To look back to the administrations of German Governors of this State, is to look upon green spots in its history. Nowhere do we find any more creditable than those of Snyder, Hiester, Schulze, Wolf, Ritner or Shunk. Well have they guarded the honor, the dignity and the treasury of the State, and indelibly have they left their mark upon her institutions. It was under George Wolf, the son of a plain German emigrant, and mainly by his untiring efforts and perseverance that the free school system was finally established in this State. Politicians, to subserve miserable party purposes, and to open an avenue to gorge themselves with public plunder, have lately gotten into the habit of clamoring for more guarantees for its safety. Absurd assumption, that sees danger where none is menaced! They call it the bulwark of the American Republic. Let these tricksters remember that the son of a German emigrant stood upon the outermost citadel. Let them remember that its safety is better guaranteed by German integrity, German intellect and German firmness, than by their windy resolutions. We wish also to remind you that it was nothing but the treachery of his supporters that interfered with putting at the head of the Presidential ticket of one of the great parties of the country the name of a German, the gentleman who so quietly and unostentatiously administers the office of Governor of this Commonwealth.

Take up the educational department, your colleges and universities in this State. You there find the German coming up to the full measure of his well established fame. In the pulpit of every religious denomination for which Germans have any attachment, their

priests and pastors are as liberal, pious and learned as any that can be found. At the bar and on the bench and rostrum you will find them by scores, honored, able and diligent. Frederick Smith, a native of this county, attained to the dignity of the Supreme bench in our State. He was a grandson of one of the first pastors of the Lutheran church, corner of 6th and Washington streets, and father of Hon. Henry W. Smith. It is a notable fact that on our own bench, two law judges of pure German origin—Judges Hagenman and Sassaman—are flanked on either side by two Associate Judges—Buskirk and Brueckman—in whose veins flows the blood of the Netherlands. Their names will be found in the records of the Thirty Years' War. Your Congressmen and Senators, with very few exceptions, have been of the same stock, Hiesters, Snyders, Ritters, Keim, Muhlenberg, Getz, and have held up their heads with the best, they were descendants of the very earliest settlers distinguished in the Indian and revolutionary wars. Your present Congressman has the blood of the old Indian fighters of Bernville. So, too, with your State Legislatures, your banking institutions. Everywhere you will find them.

We count a Professor—Joseph Leidy—since the death of Agassiz, at the head of Natural Science. In medicine a Professor Gross, of world-wide reputation. In art, P. F. Rothermel, of Berks county stock, we believe, whose pencil will make forever live the battle scenes of Gettysburg. May we not express the hope that his genius will some day immortalize the German emigrant of the early day. Indeed, the names of those who occupy the leading places in society, places of trust

*How Hiester
Clymer*

and business, if collected, would read like the muster roll of a German regiment of Frederick the Great, the Emperor William, or any other German King, with here and there a foreign name which would represent the soldiers of fortune, whom we find in the ranks of every great army.

If we cast our eyes in the direction of great commercial enterprises, we will find the German blood asserting its equality with the best. John W. Garret, the great railroad man of the Baltimore and Ohio, Frank Gowen of the Philadelphia and Reading, have in them the blood of Germans from Eastern Pennsylvania—two railroad presidents whose names have never been connected with improper practices in legislation. But David Deshler, bearing a name frequently occurring in the earliest records of Eastern Pennsylvania, from whence he emigrated to the State of Alabama, was the only man of whom we know, that ever owned a whole railroad, lock, stock and barrel. It was the first railroad west of the Alleghenies, 1834 and 1835. It ran from Decatur to Tuscumbia, was forty-two miles in length and known as the Tuscumbia and Decatur Railroad. It is now part of the Memphis and Charleston Road. He was, besides, prominent in the political councils of the State. Gen. Deshler, before mentioned as distinguished in the Confederate army, was of his family. His blood relatives are numerous in the South and in Eastern Pennsylvania, mainly in Lehigh county. In this connection we must not omit the name of Jacob Yoder, of Reading, who was the first white man to float a flat boat down the Mississippi. This was in 1782. He died at Louisville, Kentucky, and is there buried.

Fred. Graff, a descendant of one of the earliest settlers, constructed the Fairmount water works. The public buildings of Eastern Pennsylvania, outside of Philadelphia, we are speaking of now; her churches, her court houses, her school houses and their appointments are the first in the State, and in point of size, architectural and decorative beauty, those built by the German stock surpass by far those of other races. It is not necessary for me to speak of the advance of the race in agriculture here in the centre of the garden spot of Pennsylvania. What God and German industry have done for the country in this respect, neither the pen of the poet, the pencil of the painter, nor the tongue of the orator can portray.

We must not forget, also, to pay a just tribute to workingmen of German blood in this land. Their humble, continuous, productive industry under free institutions, like the streams in the bowels of the earth flowing silently on till they mingle together a mighty ocean, upon which the world's rich argosies sail, have contributed to place the country's prosperity upon an enduring basis. In their case, as it ever must, frugality, good habits, energy and prudence have met their usual reward in a greater self-respect, comfort, independence and the confidence and respect of the community. May the day not long be delayed when God will grant the country wisdom to found such a policy as will entirely restore the industries of the country, and may the day never dawn when oppression and unjust laws will deprive labor of its just reward.

Thus have I, the American descendant of a German emigrant, as best I could, out of a great mass of material,

endeavored to tell the story of the German in this land.* I know there are many omissions ; the future and others must supply them. I have sought to deery no race. With feelings of honest pride and profound pleasure have I endeavored to set before his descendants and his countrymen, in such a way as to deserve willing recognition, the great and useful services that he has rendered since 1684, towards making the Grand Exposition now open at Philadelphia possible. You, gentlemen of the societies, under whose auspices this celebration has been held, find ample reasons in the past records of our race for a German celebration of the Centennial anniversary. This county of Berks, teeming with memories of the dangers, trials, hardships, sufferings, lives and deaths of the German settlers, is a most fitting place for the celebration. I cannot refrain here from pointing to the fact that the first township in the State to fill the quota called for by the Centennial managers, was that of Heidelberg, the region of country first settled by Germans near the grave of Conrad Weiser.

The record proves that wherever placed, we are abreast of any race in history. That the German has done his full share and as much as any other race towards the greatness, wealth, prosperity and everything

*It is with great pleasure I acknowledge my obligations to George De B. Keim, Esq., Solicitor General of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and Vice President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, for much useful information and important data. He is a native of Reading, to which place his ancestor, Nicholas Keim, came from Oley township. The family owned for many years the White Store, built by Conrad Weiser, of which mention is made in the Address. The name of the family has been inseparably connected with the history of Berks county from its first settlement to the present day.—D. E.

else that goes to the building up of the State. Because that record is right, I desire to rebuke those persons who, by changing their names, have sought to conceal their origin, or who from any motive deny their German ancestry. They are worse than barbarians. A German name here is a mark of nobility—a title of honor.

I desire to draw attention to those virtues of moderation, frugality and industry that made your State so prosperous, and to tell my fellow citizens that if we would restore and maintain the individual and solid prosperity of former days, we must progress backward from this cursed modern extravagance, undue desire to grow rich and live without working, to German house-keeping.

That if we wish to preserve the commercial credit of the people, the honor and dignity of the State, and remove grievous burdens from the back of the tax-payer, we must progress backward to German integrity and the purity of the early German administrations of the State.

I desire to encourage among children and young men a feeling of pride in their German ancestry, a desire to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with their history to the end, that they may be inspired to like virtues for the good of their fellowmen and the State. Unlike Alexander, there are worlds yet for German blood and brain, and energy, and valor to conquer. There are heights yet on which we must plant the German banner. Honors in every walk in life to which we must attach the German name. We must yield to no race under the sun. To this end we must become imbued with that deep respect for religion that is so characteristic of our German ancestry of every denomination or

creed; we must cultivate their virtues, we must study the language and institutions, and respect the laws of the country. If the laws are not right, we must change them. With liberty for our watchword, we must give notice to the world that the German race here on this Western Continent will not permit or countenance any measures that interfere with a man's rights of conscience, that every man shall have the right to pursue any honorable calling and to worship God in any form of religion without prejudice to his civil or political rights. In other words, let the world know that the blood of the German race is to-day what it was in the forests of Germany before Europe knew what liberty was—*free*—that they are now in favor of Constitutional Liberty, and are determined that this shall be in deed the land of freedom, restrained only by law. May we not then hope that the career now opening upon the German race at home and abroad will be *the* page in the world's history, and that their descendants for untold cycles will meet century after century as we do this day, to celebrate deeds of *German liberty, German valor, German patriotism, German virtue in American History.*



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